

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 12094

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK

SUBJECT: INDIAN TEAM LEAVES FOR NEXT ROUND OF INDO-PAK TALKS

REF: NEW DELHI 11244

SUMMARY: THE 15-MAN INDIAN DELEGATION LEAVES DELHI SEPTEMBER 11 FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF INDIA-PAKISTAN TALKS IN ISLAMABAD. THE DELEGATION HAS BOTH THE TECHNICAL COMPETENCE AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY CLOUD NECESSARY TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE TWO SPECIFIC ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED (TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES) AND ALSO TO DISCUSS INFORMALLY BROADER ISSUES. ON THE LATTER, WE EXPECT THE INDIANS WILL BE CAUTIOUS - EVENTS SINCE THE LAST INDIA-PAKISTAN MEETING IN APRIL HAVE REDUCED WHAT LITTLE CONFIDENCE EXISTED BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES. END SUMMARY.

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1. A 15-MAN DELEGATION LEAVES DELHI THE AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 11 TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS WITH PAKISTAN SEPTEMBER 12 ON RESUMPTION OF TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE DELEGATION IS HEADED BY FOREIGN SECRETARY KEWAL SINGH, WHO IS THE SENIOR CIVIL SERVANT IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. IT INCLUDES REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HOME MINISTRY AND THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS.

2. TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATIONS: THE HEAD OF THE PAKISTAN DIVISION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, ASHOK CHIB, TOLD THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR SEPTEMBER 10 THAT HE SAW NO REAL DIFFICULTY IN AGREEING TO RESUME TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATIONS. INDIA VIEWS THOSE AS TECHNICAL ISSUES AND IS TAKING ALONG SEVERAL DRAFT AGREEMENTS, HE SAID. WE WOULD ADD THAT THERE WILL PROBABLY STILL BE HARD BARGAINING EVEN ON THESE ISSUES, SINCE THAT IS THE HALLMARK OF INDIA-PAKISTAN NEGOTIATIONS. IF THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE SUCCESSFUL, IT WILL MARK THE FIRST AGREEMENT, HOWEVER SMALL, WHICH GOES BEYOND SIMPLY TIDYING UP AFTER THE 1971 WAR. COMMUNICATIONS HAVE BEEN BROKEN SINCE THE 1965 WAR, AND TRAVEL WAS SHARPLY RESTRICTED AFTER THAT WAR.

3. OTHER ISSUES: INDIA WANTS TO TALK ABOUT OVERFLIGHTS NEXT. IT HOPES FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS IN ISLAMABAD FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER ROUND OF TALKS, PRESUMABLY IN DELHI. BEYOND THIS, INDIA DESIRES BECOME LESS SPECIFIC, ALTHOUGH IT STILL TALKS IN GENERAL ABOUT THE NEED FOR AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE "ATMOSPHERE" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. INDIA IS PREPARED FOR PAKISTAN TO RAISE ISSUES SUCH AS KASHMIR, THE INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION, AND THE PAKISTANI PROPOSAL FOR A SOUTH ASIA NUCLEAR FREE ZONE. ON KASHMIR, CHIB SAID THAT INDIA WOULD REITERATE ITS UNDERSTANDING THAT THE SIMLA AGREEMENT LEFT EACH COUNTRY WITH EFFECTIVE CONTROL ON ITS SIDE OF THE LINE--INDIA DID NOT CONSULT WITH PAKISTAN ABOUT CHANGES IN THE INDIAN STATE OF KASHMIR ANY MORE THAN PAKISTAN CONSULTED WITH INDIA ABOUT CHANGES IN AZAD KASHMIR. (SWARAN SINGH LAST MONTH TOLD PARLIAMENT THAT AS FAR AS INDIA WAS CONCERNED THE SIMLA AGREEMENT'S REFERENCE TO A "FINAL SETTLEMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR" MEANT THE PAKISTANI OCCUPATION OF A PORTION OF KASHMIR.) ON THE INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION, WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT INDIA IS WILLING TO OFFER PAKISTAN ANY MORE "GUARANTEES" THAN IT ALREADY HAS. INDIA IS, HOWEVER, WILLING

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TO HEAR WHAT PAKISTAN HAS TO SAY. IT WILL SEEK CLARIFICATION OF THE PAKISTANI PROPOSAL FOR A SOUTH ASIA NUCLEAR FREE ZONE BUT WILL NOT REACT OFFICIALLY. LINKAGE OF ANY OF THESE ISSUES WITH THE TECHNICAL NEGOTIATIONS ON TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATION COULD JEOPARDIZE THE OUTCOME OF THOSE NEGOTIATIONS.

4. COMMENT: THE PICTURE CONTINUES MIXED. INDIA AND PAKISTAN MAY AGREE TO TAKE THE SMALL STEP OF RESUMING TRAVEL AND COMMUN-

ICATIONS, JUST AS THEY ARE NOW QUIETLY REPATRIATING PRE-WAR
DETAINEES. OUR IMPRESSION BASED ON CONVERSATIONS HERE AND OF
OUR POLITICAL COUNSELOR ON A VISIT TO ISLAMABAD TWO WEEKS AGO IS
THAT THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE TALKS WILL BE STRAINED AND COOL.

MOYNIHAN

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